

The Ballarat Naturalist

September 2015



ANN Get-together Hobart 2014

reports by Club Members

Australian Naturalists Network (ANN) started in the late 1990's when Dick Southcombe began compiling a list of field naturalist's clubs of Australia. The first Get-together was held in Alice Springs in 2000. The ninth Get-together will be held in Perth in 2016.

In 2014 Field Naturalists gathered in Hobart for the Get-together hosted by Tasmanian Field Naturalists Club.

The first excursion was to the Tasmanian Bushland Garden which has been developed adjacent to the Tasman Highway near Buckland approximately 50 km north-east of Hobart. When purchased in 2000 the 22-ha timbered dolerite hill had been degraded by grazing, fire-wood collection and a dolomite quarry. Over the next 10 years it was developed into a regional botanic garden to show case the native



Photo: The Neck, Bruny Island

flora of SE Tasmania. The garden was opened to the public in 2010.

Display beds have been planted to simulate ten natural plant communities growing on in south-east Tasmania and some of the rare plants of eastern Tasmania. The landscaping features many local rocks and

logs which give a natural setting, and the gardens merge into the surrounding grassy woodland.

John Gregurke

For the Get-together the field naturalists gathered at the Lea Scout camp outside Hobart. Each day, over the eight days, we taken in two buses to areas of interest within a 2-hr driving-radius. We shared meals together and at night, heard a wide variety of guest speakers.



Photo: Kangaroo ferns

After reading a summary of the guest speaker topics, I showed photos of most of the day excursions. These included the rain-forest of the Styx State park with its very tall trees (also where we had a flat tyre) followed by views of Bruny Island. The third day was spent around Eaglehawk Neck, particularly focusing on the tessellated pavement area. We noted its geology and then saw the many sea weeds, sea creatures and anemones that could be seen at low tide in the crevices and rock pools.

For our trip to Mt Hartz national park we were greeted by a lovely day and were able to have a picnic lunch at Lake Osborne, a glacial lake in this alpine region. We were also able to see a few of the ancient King Billy Pines around the lake’s edge. We visited the Bonorong Wildlife Sanctuary seeing some of the rescued animals. On another day we were taken to Marion Bay and had close up views of a group of migratory Bar-tailed Godwits, which was a special opportunity for s photography.

Our final day was spent up Mt Wellington in the mist. However, in spite of lack of great views, the plant life was abundant and we saw colourful lichens on rocks, red and purple berries of the Pink Mountain Berry and Spreading Cheese Berry bushes, white hak-eas, daisies and other plants.



Photo: Thysmia, rare plant in leaf litter

So even though a damp day (our only one) it was a lovely

finale to our memorable Tasmanian holiday in the company of like-minded friends. Congratulations to Hobart group for their great efforts in organising such a varied and interesting program.

Val Hocking

On the various talks and excursions at ANN Hobart we were shown different-sized living organisms ranging from the one to three millimetre fruiting bodies of some slime moulds to 90 metre tall Mountain Ash trees. Sarah Lloyd, the author of the book ‘*Where the slime mould creeps*’ showed us some of her collection of slime mould fruiting bodies with a small fragment of the substrate. These she glued to a card which she kept in matchboxes. One needed a magnifying glass to see the tiny lollypop shaped fruiting bodies called Sporotheca.

In the rainforest environment of the Styx State Forest we were shown an 86 metre tall Mountain Ash, *Eucalyptus regnans*. This tree was protected with a board walk including seating with a sloping back so one could get a comfortable look at this massive tree. Other trees in this area included Sassafras and Myrtle Beech. As well as ferns, mosses



Photo: Breech Orange

and lichens, there were some fungi. One interesting fungi was the Beech Orange which in Australia is seen only on Myrtle Beech trees on which it forms woody galls. A membrane that envelops the immature fruit body ruptures as the ball expands revealing a pattern of concave depressions.

In Victoria one would not expect to see many species of fungi in October, so I was delighted to see in Tasmania the colourful Waxcaps. These included the pearly white *Humidicutis mavis*, the lime green *Hygrocybe graminicolor*, the bright lemon *H. chromolimonea*, two red species *H. miniata* and *H. saltorivula*. A purple Waxcap was also seen. Another unusual fungus was *Pleurotus australe*, which has a funnel shaped shell that was attached to a rotting log.

On the Lenah track on the side of Mount Wellington, there was a wide variety of mosses, lichens and ferns among the dolerite rocks. One common lichen was *Sterocaulon ramulosum*, which had brown

fruiting bodies at the end of its pale grey shrubby stems. There were some *Cladonia* lichen species including the tall pointed *Cladonia scabriuscula* and *C. merochlorophaea* which has golf tee shaped stems called podetia.



Photo: *Pleurotus australe*

From the rock pool terraces on the east coast to the top of Mount Wellington and elsewhere, at ANN 2014, there was a remarkable variety of things to see.

Les Hanrahan

Excursion 9 Aug . *Eucalypts South of Ballarat*

Twelve members ventured out on Sunday 9th August to explore the eucalypts south of Ballarat. John Gregurke had researched the trees that would be seen so the group could be taken directly to the varieties to be identified and shown the characteristics that facilitated identification. John had been out just before the excursion and in some places even secreted specimens with buds, fruits and leaves so no time was lost searching for material.

The first stop was in Fussell Street where we tasted the lerps on a Red ironbark, *Eucalyptus tricarpa* with John explaining the stages of development of the sap-sucking bugs (psyllids) and how they produce the sweet tasting material, enjoyed by birds and in earlier times by Aborigines and early settlers.

It was then off to the Sparrow Ground reserve where the differences between Broad and Narrow leaved Peppermints were explained and also where Manna gum *E. viminalis subsp cygnetensis*, Scentbark, *E. aromaphloia* and Messmate *E. obliqua* were observed. Next was a spot in the Canadian Forest where the regeneration after the clearing of pines could be seen. Here also was a specimen of Penny-leaf flat pea *Platylobium rotundum*, a rare plant for the area and where it was interesting to observe this plant and compare it with the other species of *Platylobium* with which we are more familiar. A number of other stops were made in the Canadian Forest observing Yarra gum, *E. yarraensis* and Brown stringybark *E. baxteri* as well as other specimens already seen. A Cup Gum *E. cosmophylla* was observed on the road side just after turning off Geelong Road. It was a planted specimen but so attractive it warranted a stop.

A highlight was a visit to the Union Lawn at Federation University where there is a beautifully formed very large specimen of Tasmanian blue gum *E. globulus subsp globulus*. Here a plaque indicates that this tree was planted on Arbor day 1896 and we were in awe of the size to which it has grown since then. Several fungi specimens were observed growing on it as well as an interesting growth pattern. Two branches have grown close to each other and joined after some time, thus forming a narrow "window".

In Buninyong a stop was made in Nolan Street to observe the Corroboree or Bowen tree, a Manna gum *E. viminalis subsp viminalis* which showed considerable decay with members observing that they had seen it in better condition many years ago. It is to be hoped that development and urbanisation does not result in the loss of this historic tree which is reputed to be the site of a historic meeting between Victorian governor Sir George Bowen and local aboriginal people.

Back roads were taken to Garibaldi where lunch was eaten at the hall before venturing down Hardies Hill Road to observe a Snow gum *E. pauciflora ssp pauciflora* and then to the Hardies Hill Water reserve where there were Candlebarks *E. rubida* as well as other species already seen.

The Enfield Forest was next, seeing further examples and finally stopping in a recently burnt area where there was a good display of yellow flowers from *Acacia myrtifolia* and red and white from *Epacris impressa*. Other native flowers observed here included *Correa reflexa*, *Pultenaea gunnii*, *Pimelea linifolia*, Showy Violet *Viola betonicifolia* and Ivy-leaf violet *Viola hederacea*.

At each location John provided details of the identifying characteristics of each tree showing buds, fruits and leaves some of which he had previously located and strategically placed. Leaf length, width, vein pattern, shape and even the feel were all part of identification. A Brown Stringybark *E. baxteri* had low growing, juvenile leaves which felt rough like sandpaper and a hand lens revealed "hairs" on the underside. This feel is not present in mature leaves. All leaf stages of Messmate *E. obilqua* are smooth. Bark was included in our search but probably the main characteristics are to be found in the fruits and "gumnuts". Size, shape, number, location of the operculum or where it had been were all examined.

In all 13 species were observed. Thanks John for a very informative and interesting journey through Eucalypts of bush south of Ballarat.

Our FNCB 2015 camp
Weekend 16-18 October Aireys Inlet
Accommodation details: Aireys Inlet Holiday Park email
info@aireysinletholidaypark.com.au

www.aicp.com.au,

Excerpts from 7 Aug , Meeting Minutes

Opening and Apologies

Attendance: President welcomed 20 members. Apologies: G Binns, S Sorrell, F Hanrahan, P & E Noble, A Riddell, D & E Thurgood, K Hammond, M Sorrell, K Elder.

Correspondence: IN From Victorian National Parks Association: link to online newsletter “Nature Watch”, July 2015.

From Environment Victoria (EV): notification of public rally on July 25 at the ALP National Conference calling for serious action on climate change; email detailing Federal Gov’t instructions to the Clean Energy Finance Corporation to withdraw support from wind and solar power projects.

From John Petheram, FNCB member: a copy of John’s submission to Parliamentary Enquiry into Unconventional Gas Mining in Vic.; from Wombat Forestcare: From Lee Miezis, Dept. of Environment, Land, Water and Planning: email summarising the recommendations of the report from the Inspector General for Emergency Management (IGEM) following his review of performance targets for bushfire fuel management on public land. From Helen Lewers, WHAM: Agenda for and Minutes of WHAM Club Meeting on July 8 & 27; update on their activities; preparatory notes for workshop on the review of the “Native Vegetation Permitted Clearing Regulations” on July 27; link to a story in The Age on-line titled “900 giant native trees felled in VicRoads planning blunder”.

From Rodger Elliot, Friends of Royal Botanic Gardens, Cranbourne: information on the search for anecdotes and memorabilia about the zoo/ menagerie that was once in the Ballarat Botanical Gardens by the Friends of the BBGs’ history group.

From Bill Hampel, Author of “Against the Grain”: Order Form and summary of contents of his new book detailing the actions of 14 farmers who accept the science of Climate Change.

From Ken Hartup: Event flyer and email inviting us to the opening of the exhibition “Alan Hartup: a selection of nature photos” on Sat. October 10, 3.00 - 5.00 pm at the Newstead Railway Arts Hub.
Angair: Flyer for Wildflower Weekend, Art Show, Anglesea, Sept.

Reports: Treasurer's Report: Opening bal \$ 15,097.92 Inc \$ 1,659.10 Exp \$ 201.80Closing bal: \$ 16,555.
La Gerche Trail Signage Grant Project: John Petheram – labels finalised and being printed.
Andy Arnold reported on the recent SWIFFT conference and invited members to attend the next scheduled for Thursday 29 October 2015 on Threatened flora (mapping technology). More information www.swifft.net.au/cb_pages/video_conferencing.php

General Business.

Upcoming SEANA Camps were discussed.

Yr	Autumn	Spring
'16	Geelong FNC. Dates TBA	General Meeting end of Aug. Venue TBA
'17	Sale & District/ Latrobe Valley FNC. Dates TBA	Ringwood FNC. Dates TBA
'18	Yet to be confirmed	Possible ANN Get-together

Change to SEANA rules not have a SEANA camp in the half year that of ANN Get-together. General meeting no camp in Spring 2016

Field Reports

Margaret Thomas: Little Ravens nesting; Red-browed Finch, Crimson Rosella, New Holland Honeyeater, Eastern Spinebill in Nerrina garden; Yellow Robin at Nerrina wetland. Common Bronzewing and Grey Kangaroo at The Gong. Lyrebirds at Olinda.
John Morrish: Brown Goshawk feeding on starling in Wendouree garden. John Petheram: Large population of White-winged Choughs in Moola Street area this year from April to August. Paul Norquay: Killed 200 European Wasps overwintering in fire wood heap at Mt Egerton. Magpies refurbishing nests in July. Bill Elder: Pair of Brown Falcons regularly seen perched on power line at Smythes Creek every morning unless temperature is below 5°C. Wayne McGuire: At Lake Burrumbeet, Magpie calling at 2am on moonlit night. Carol Hall: 3 separate Water Rats around west and south side of Lake Wendouree

CALENDAR 2015-16

September

- Fri 4 *Koalas - Echidna Walkabout & Wildlife Tours, Janine Duffy*
- Sat 5 Excursion: *Basalt-Eganstown area* - Paul Norquay & Elspeth Swan, Club Members
- Tues 15 Mid-month exc. *Fifteen Acres at Dereel and Berringa area; orchids and other early spring flowers.*
- 25-27 Spring SEANA Camp at Donald

October

- Fri 7 **Stella Bedggood Memorial Lecture:**
Fur & Feathers - Tony Wilson
- Sun 7 Exc: *Lilwarre Family Day: orchid and waterbug survey* - Emily and Peter Noble, Club Members
- 16-18 Club's camp at Airey's Inlet

Committee

President	Peter Dalman	
Vice –Pres	Fran Hanrahan	Val Hocking
Secretary	Emily Noble	John Mildren
Treasurer	Les Hanrahan	
Claire Dalman		
John Gregurke		
Wayne McGuire		

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Meetings are held at the Primary Industries Training Centre, cnr of Gillies and Gregory Sts, on the first Friday of the month at 7.30pm..

Excursions: Leave from the carpark at the Primary Industries Training Centre, cnr Gillies and Gregory Sts. at 9.30 am, unless otherwise advised.

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